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HEALTH HEROES

As New York salutes health workers, Missouri fights a surge

Grand marshal Sandra Lindsay, a health care worker who was the first person in the country to get a COVID-19 vaccine shot, waves to spectators as she leads marchers through the Financial District as confetti falls during a parade honoring essential workers for their efforts in getting New York City through the COVID-19 pandemic, Wednesday, July 7, 2021, in New York.

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As New York salutes health workers, Missouri fights a surge

By **HEATHER HOLLINSWORTH and DEEPTI HAJELA**
Associated Press

New York held a ticker-tape parade Wednesday for the health care workers and others who helped the city pull through the darkest days of COVID-19, while authorities in Missouri struggled to beat back a surge blamed on the fast-spreading delta variant and deep resistance to getting vaccinated.

The split-screen images could be a glimpse of what public health experts say may lie ahead for the U.S. even as the economy opens up again and life gets back to something close to normal: outbreaks in corners of the country with low vaccination rates. "We've got a lot to appreciate, because we're well underway in our recovery," declared New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, who rode on a parade float with hospital employees down the Canyon of Heroes, the skyscraper-lined stretch of Broadway where astronauts, returning soldiers and championship teams are feted.

In Missouri, meanwhile, the Springfield area has been hit so hard that one hospital had to borrow ventilators over the Fourth of July weekend and begged on social media for help from respiratory therapists, several of whom volunteered from other states. Members of a new federal "surge response team" also began arriving to help suppress the outbreak.

Missouri not only leads the nation in new cases relative to the population, it is also averaging 1,000 cases per day — about the same number as the entire Northeast, including the big cities in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massa-

chusetts. California, with 40 million people, is posting only

one dose of the vaccine, compared with 55% of the U.S. population. Some rural

"We try to convince people, but it is almost like you are talking a different

30s, said Ashley Kimberling Casad, vice president of clinical services. She said she had been hopeful when she eyed the COVID-19 numbers in May as she prepared to return from maternity leave.

"I really thought when I came back from maternity leave that, not that COVID would be gone, but that it would just be so manageable. Then all of a sudden it started spiking," she said, adding that nearly all the virus samples that the hospital is sending for testing are proving to be the delta variant.

Citing the rise in cases, the Springfield school district reinstated its mask requirement for its summer program starting Wednesday. The contrasting scenes in the U.S. came as the worldwide death toll from COVID-19 closed in on 4 million, by Johns Hopkins University's count. COVID-19 deaths nationwide are down to around 200 per day from a peak of over 3,400 per day in January. In New York, those honored at the parade included nurses and doctors, emergency crews, bus drivers and train operators, teachers and utility workers. The crowds along the route were thin, in part because many businesses are still operating remotely.

"What a difference a year makes," said parade grand marshal Sandra Lindsay, a nurse who was the first person in the country to get a COVID-19 vaccine shot.

"Fifteen months ago, we were in a much different place, but thanks to the heroic efforts of so many — health care workers, first responders, front-line workers, the people who fed us, the people who put their lives on the line, we can't thank them enough." □



Participants on floats move up Broadway through the Financial District as confetti falls during a parade honoring essential workers for their efforts in getting New York City through the COVID-19 pandemic, Wednesday, July 7, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

slightly higher case numbers than Missouri, which has a population of 6 million.

Northeastern states have seen cases, deaths and hospitalizations plummet to almost nothing amid widespread acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vermont has gone 26 days with new case numbers in single digits. In Maryland, the governor's office said every death recorded in June was in an unvaccinated person.

New York City, which was the lethal epicenter of the U.S. outbreak in the spring of 2020, when the number of dead peaked at over 800 a day, regularly goes entire days with no reported deaths.

The problem in Missouri, as health experts see it: Just 45% of the state's residents have received at least

counties near Springfield have vaccination rates in the teens and 20s.

At the same time, the delta variant is fast becoming the predominant strain in the state. Testing of wastewater shows it is spreading from rural areas into more populated places.

Mercy Hospital Springfield reported Tuesday that it had more than 120 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 — the highest total since the pandemic began. Seventeen people died in the latest two-week reporting period in the county that surrounds Springfield, the most since January. None were vaccinated, authorities said.

Erik Frederick, Mercy's chief administrative officer, said staff members are frustrated knowing that "this is preventable this time" because of the vaccine.

language," he lamented. "There is no way they are going to get a vaccine. Their personal freedom is more important."

The Mercy system announced Wednesday that it is requiring vaccinations among staff at the hospital in Springfield, as well as at its 29 other hospitals and 900 or so clinics in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas. It said about 75% of its more than 40,000 employees are vaccinated. Missouri also never had a statewide mask mandate. The sentiment against government intervention is so strong that Brian Steele, mayor of the Springfield suburb of Nixa, is facing a recall vote after imposing a mask rule, even though it has long since expired.

At Springfield's other hospital, Cox South, several patients are in their 20s and

Biden: What's good for families can also be good for economy

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE

Associated Press

CRYSTAL LAKE, Ill. (AP) —

President Joe Biden pitched his proposed investments in families and education at an Illinois community college on Wednesday, telling residents of the swing district that what's good for families is also good for the economy.

The president set out for the Chicago suburbs to bolster support for both his bipartisan infrastructure deal and a broader package that he expects will be passed with only Democratic votes. His message is one designed to resonate with suburban parents, college graduates and the working poor — a coalition that was key to Biden's election win last year. "There's a lot of work ahead of us to finish the job, but we're going to get it done," Biden said in a 30-minute speech that he self-deprecatingly suggested was boring but important. "We're going to reimagine what our economy and our future could be." Before the speech, Biden toured a metals lab at the McHenry County College. His message was that any investments in manufacturing, roads and bridges should be paired with funding for child care, health



President Joe Biden delivers remarks on infrastructure spending at McHenry County College, Wednesday, July 7, 2021, in Crystal Lake, Ill.

Associated Press

care and education.

The president listed details of the bipartisan infrastructure deal, but the agreement constitutes only part of the \$4 trillion in spending Biden has proposed in a broader plan to reinvigorate the economy and boost the middle class. Republicans have warned that the tax increases on corporations and the wealthy needed to fund Biden's ambitions will hurt the economy.

Among Biden's proposals

are two years of free community college, universal prekindergarten and paid family and medical leave. He also seeks to extend the expansion in the child tax credit and the health care premium subsidies from the COVID-19 aid bill.

Democrats plan to include much of this in a bill they hope to pass through a legislative maneuver that would require just a simple majority vote, skirting the 60-vote hurdle in an evenly divided Senate. Biden has

said he would prefer that the two bills move through Congress together, and Democrats are hoping to make progress this month on both.

The Biden administration promoted its agenda on multiple fronts Wednesday. First lady Jill Biden visited an elementary school in Washington to discuss how the trillions of dollars the president wants Congress to spend on families would pay for more affordable child care, preschool for all

3- and 4-year-olds, larger salaries for teachers and modern school buildings with safe drinking water, along with more teachers of color and more nurses and counselors to help students with their emotional and other needs.

"You and your students will continue to be one of our top priorities, not just in one legislative bill, but in everything we do," she said during a speech to a virtual meeting of the American Federation of Teachers union.

President Biden was greeted by Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot when he landed in Illinois and was met at the community college by Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker; Illinois' two Democratic senators, Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth; and Democratic Rep. Lauren Underwood, who represents the district.

Biden won Illinois' 14th Congressional District by about 2 percentage points in 2020, and Underwood won reelection by less than that. Hers is one of the top-targeted seats in the nation and is emblematic of the kind of district Democrats will need to hold onto in the 2022 midterms if they hope to maintain control of the House. □

Trump files suit against Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

By JILL COLVIN and MATT O'BRIEN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Former President Donald Trump has filed suit against three of the country's biggest tech companies, claiming he and other conservatives have been wrongfully censored.

Trump announced the action against Facebook, Twitter and Google's YouTube, along with the companies' CEOs, at a press conference in New Jersey on Wednesday. He was joined by other plaintiffs in the suits, which were filed in federal court in Miami.

"We're demanding an end to the shadow-banning, a stop to the silencing and a stop to the blacklisting,

banishing and canceling that you know so well," he said.

Under Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act, social media platforms are allowed to moderate their services by removing posts that, for instance, are obscene or violate the services' own standards, so long as they are acting in "good faith." The law also generally exempts internet companies from liability for the material that users post.

But Trump and some other politicians have long argued that Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms have abused that protection and should lose their immunity — or at least have to earn it by sat-

isfying requirements set by the government.

Trump was suspended from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube after his followers stormed the Capitol building on Jan. 6. The companies cited concerns that he would incite further violence. Facebook, Google and Twitter all declined comment Wednesday.

The suits argue that banning or suspending Trump and the other plaintiffs is a violation of the First Amendment, despite the fact that the companies are private. The suit against Facebook and CEO Mark Zuckerberg says Facebook acted unconstitutionally when it removed Trump from the platform. Suits against Twitter and YouTube make sim-



Former President Donald Trump imitates the shooting of a gun with his finger while talking about gun violence in Chicago as he speaks at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, N.J., Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Associated Press

ilar claims. All three ask the court to award unspecified damages, declare Section 230 unconstitutional and restore Trump's ac-

counts, along with those of the other plaintiffs — a handful of others who have all had posts or accounts removed. □

California to pay victims of forced, coerced sterilizations

By ADAM BEAM

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— California is poised to approve reparations of up to \$25,000 to some of the thousands of people — some as young as 13 — who were sterilized decades ago because the government deemed them unfit to have children.

The payments will make California at least the third state — following Virginia and North Carolina — to compensate victims of the so-called eugenics movement that peaked in the 1930s. Supporters of the movement believed sterilizing people with mental illnesses, physical disabilities and other traits they deemed undesirable would improve the human race.

While California sterilized more than 20,000 people before its law was repealed in 1979, only a few hundred are still alive. The state has set aside \$7.5 million for the reparations program, part of its \$262.6 billion operating budget that is awaiting Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature.

California's proposal is unique because it also would pay women the state coerced to get sterilized while they were in prison, some as recently as 2010.



Stacy Cordova, whose aunt was a victim of California's forced sterilization program that began in 1909, holds a framed photo of her aunt Mary Franco, Monday, July 5, 2021, in Azusa, Calif.

Associated Press

First exposed by the Center for Investigative Reporting in 2013, a subsequent audit found California sterilized 144 women between 2005 and 2013 with little or no evidence that officials counseled them or offered alternative treatment.

While all of the women signed consent forms, officials in 39 cases did not do everything that was legally required to obtain their permission.

"We must address and face our horrific history," said Lorena Garcia Zerme-

ño, policy and communications coordinator for the advocacy group California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. "This isn't something that just happened in the past."

California's law was so prominent that it inspired similar practices in Nazi Germany, according to Paul Lombardo, a law professor at Georgia State University and an expert on the eugenics movement.

"The promise of eugenics at the very earliest is: 'We could do away with all the

state institutions — prisons, hospitals, asylums, orphanages,'" Lombardo said. "People who were in them just wouldn't be born after awhile if you sterilized all of their parents."

In California, victims include Mary Franco, who was sterilized in 1934 when she was just 13. Paperwork described her as "feeble minded" because of "sexual deviance," according to her niece, Stacy Cordova, who has researched her case. Cordova said Franco actually was molested by a

neighbor. She said her family put Franco in an institution to protect the family's reputation.

Cordova said her late aunt loved children and wanted to have a family. She married briefly when she was about 17, but Cordova said the marriage was annulled when the man discovered Franco couldn't have children. She lived a lonely life in a Mexican culture that revered big families, Cordova said.

"I don't know if it is justice. Money doesn't pay for what happened to them. But it's great to know that this is being recognized," said Cordova, who has advocated for the state to pay survivors. "For me, this is not about the money. This is about the memory."

Relatives like Cordova aren't eligible for the payments, only direct victims are.

Sterilizations in California prisons appear to date to 1999, when the state changed its policy for unknown reasons to include a sterilization procedure known as "tubal ligation" as part of inmates' medical care. Over the next decade, women reported they were coerced into this procedure, with some not fully understanding the ramifications. □

NYC mayoral primary winner Eric Adams: 'I know how to lead'



In this Tuesday, June 22, 2021, file photo, mayoral candidate Eric Adams, center, speaks to supporters during his election night party in New York.

Associated Press

By KAREN MATTHEWS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Eric Adams, the winner of the Democratic primary for

mayor of New York City, vowed Wednesday to guide the city to a new era of safety and prosperity.

"New York is going to show

America how to run cities," Adams said on "CBS This Morning." "Because I know how to run this city. I know how to lead."

Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, bested a large Democratic field in New York's first major race to use ranked choice voting. Results from the latest tabulations showed him leading former city sanitation commissioner Kathryn Garcia by 8,426 votes, or a little more than 1 percentage point.

The Associated Press called the race for Adams based on mail-in ballot results in the June 22 primary that were added to the vote count Tuesday.

Garcia conceded Wednes-

day and congratulated Adams as did Maya Wiley, a civil rights attorney who was in third place in the primary vote tally.

Adams will be the second Black mayor of the nation's largest city if he wins the general election in November.

Adams, 60, is a moderate Democrat who opposed the "defund the police" movement while acknowledging the reality of abuse such as he himself faced as a teenager when he was beaten by officers.

"I was arrested, I was assaulted by police officers," Adams said on CBS. "I didn't say, 'Woe is me.' I said, 'Why not me.' I became a police officer. I un-

derstand crime, and I also understand police abuse, and I know how we can turn around not only New York, but America."

Asked what he would say to officers who are angry about calls to defund their departments, Adams said, "I say to my officers, 'If you don't want to be on the street any more, then get off my streets.' I don't want to hear someone say, because they don't like what government is doing, you're not going to protect my public. No."

He promised, "I'm going to have the finest officers. I will have their backs, but they're going to have the backs of the people of this city." □

Shooting of star Dutch reporter raises European concern

By MOLLY QUELL

Associated Press

AMSTERDAM (AP) — European leaders expressed dismay, media rights advocates demanded justice and the Netherlands reeled in shock Wednesday after a veteran Dutch crime reporter was shot in the head in downtown Amsterdam following a TV appearance.

Peter R. de Vries, celebrated for his courageous reporting on the Dutch underworld, was fighting for his life in an Amsterdam hospital after the Tuesday night shooting.

Two suspects remained in custody Wednesday, a 35-year-old Polish citizen living in the Netherlands and a 21-year-old Dutchman, while a third person detained Tuesday night was let go, according to a Dutch police statement. Their first court appearance was scheduled for Friday. The motive for the attack was not disclosed.

The shooting was seen as a national tragedy in the Netherlands, and dozens of people brought flowers to the scene of the attack, less than a block from the



In this Thursday Jan. 31, 2008 file photo, Dutch crime reporter Peter R. de Vries arrives for a live TV show in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Associated Press

capital's famous Rijksmuseum. Some said it shook their sense of security and raised worries about respect for the rule of law.

Dutch King Willem Alexander called the shooting "an attack on journalism, the cornerstone of our constitutional state and therefore also an attack on the rule of law."

It also struck a chord else-

where in Europe, where such brutal attacks on reporters are rare and where the killings of journalists in Slovakia and Malta in recent years raised concerns about reporters' safety in developed, democratic societies.

"We might disagree with a lot we see in our media, but we have to agree that journalists investigating po-

tential abuses of power are not a threat but an asset to our democracies and our societies," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told European Parliament lawmakers Wednesday.

De Vries, 64, is the Netherlands' most prominent journalist, vaulting to fame after he covered the kidnapping of a Heineken heir in 1983. He's a regular on evening news programs and has continued to break stories about the Dutch criminal underworld. He won an International Emmy in 2008 for a television show about the disappearance of U.S. teenager Natalee Holloway while she was on holiday in the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba in 2005. "Yesterday our worst nightmare became reality," de Vries' son Royce tweeted on behalf of the family. "We as a family surround Peter with love and hope during this difficult phase. Much is still uncertain, but what is certain is that all expressions of support from all over the country now offer enormous support."

De Vries had long been considered a possible tar-

get of the criminals he doggedly reported on. Police and prosecutors would not comment on whether he had police protection.

De Vries had recently been acting as an adviser and confidant to a witness in a major trial of the alleged leader of a crime gang, Ridouan Taghi, who was extradited to the Netherlands from Dubai in 2019. Taghi is currently in jail while he stands trial along with 16 other suspects.

Liam Bakker, an Amsterdam resident who lives near the site where de Vries was attacked, described hearing three or four shots and then rushing to see what happened.

"We came out and saw him lying on the ground... bleeding," Bakker said, still rattled the next day.

He was among those paying homage at the impromptu memorial site Wednesday on a quiet, brick-lined street. A student from the nearby University of Amsterdam called it "horrible." Another woman, two generations older, set down a bouquet of sunflowers saying, "It's a shame, it's terrible." □

UK court allows U.S. to appeal denial of Assange's extradition

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's High Court has granted the U.S. government permission to appeal a decision that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange cannot be sent to the United States to face

espionage charges.

The judicial office said Wednesday that the appeal had been granted and the case would be listed for a High Court hearing. No date has been set. In January, a lower court judge refused an American

request to send Assange to the U.S. to face spying charges over WikiLeaks' publication of secret military documents a decade ago. District Judge Vanessa Baraitser denied extradition on health grounds, saying Assange was likely to kill himself if held under harsh U.S. prison conditions.

The judge ordered that Assange must remain in prison during any potential U.S. appeal, ruling that the Australian citizen "has an incentive to abscond" if he were freed.

Assange, 50, has been in London's high-security Belmarsh Prison since he was arrested in April 2019 for skipping bail seven years earlier during a separate legal battle.

Assange spent seven years holed up inside Ecuador's London embassy, where he fled in 2012 to avoid

extradition to Sweden to face allegations of rape and sexual assault. Sweden dropped the sex crimes investigations in November 2019 because so much time had elapsed.

U.S. prosecutors have indicted Assange on 17 espionage charges and one charge of computer misuse over WikiLeaks' publication of thousands of leaked military and diplomatic documents. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

The prosecutors say Assange unlawfully helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published. Lawyers for Assange argue that he was acting as a journalist and is entitled to First Amendment freedom of speech protections

for publishing documents that exposed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. Assange's fiancée, Stella Moris, urged U.S. President Joe Biden on Wednesday to drop the prosecution launched under his predecessor, Donald Trump. Moris, who has two young sons with Assange, said outside the High Court that the WikiLeaks founder was "very unwell" in prison. "He won his case in January. Why is he even in prison?" she said. "I'm appealing to the Biden administration to do the right thing. This appeal was taken two days before the Trump administration left office, and if the Biden administration is serious about respecting the rule of law, the First Amendment and defending global press freedom, the only thing it can do is drop this case." □



In this Friday May 19, 2017 file photo, Julian Assange greets supporters outside the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

Associated Press

UK bases on Cyprus boost fight against migrant smugglers

By **MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS**
Associated Press

PERGAMOS, Cyprus (AP) —

Authorities at a British military base on Cyprus have hired 50% more customs officers and procured detection equipment to better thwart illegal immigration from the breakaway north of the ethnically split island. The addition of 24 new officers and four SUVs — two with thermal imaging cameras — allows authorities to patrol around-the-clock along a 45-kilometer (28-mile) boundary, Customs and Immigration Chief Adam Chatfield said.

More migrants have arrived on Cyprus without authorization in recent years. In 2018, authorities located 17 people trying to cross in six instances. That jumped to 33 people in 16 crossing attempts a year later, while 67 people were intercepted in nine attempted crossings last year. Cyprus was cleft along ethnic lines in 1974 when Turkey invaded following a coup aimed at union with Greece. The breakaway Turkish Cypriot north declared independence nearly a decade later, but only Turkey recognizes it. Turkey also maintains more than 35,000 troops in northern Cyprus.



A British police officer controls a drone with cameras within the British military base, between Greek Cypriot, south, and Turkish Cypriots, north, near Dhekelia military base, in Cyprus, Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

Associated Press

A buffer zone controlled by U.N. peacekeepers separates the north from the Greek Cypriot south where the island's internationally recognized government is seated. Although Cyprus is a European Union member, only the southern part enjoys the bloc's full benefits.

The EU is boosting the role of its border guard and ramping up security and surveillance along its eastern

borders, including nearby Greece where authorities have extended a border wall facing Turkey and set up high-tech observation towers. Dhekelia Garrison, one of two military bases that the U.K. retained after Cyprus gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, directly abuts the north along a corridor of farmland, abandoned homes and fields that offers secluded routes for

smugglers, or for migrants to cross. There's not even a fence to separate the base from the north.

Chatfield told The Associated Press that migrants are intercepted in groups of 10 to 20 at an average rate of once a month. The overwhelming majority now are Syrian men seeking asylum in the south.

About 5 million Syrians have fled their country during a 10-year conflict that has

killed about half a million people. Many more have been displaced inside Syria.

Authorities on the base in Cyprus have an agreement with the government to transfer asylum-seekers to the south where their claims are processed. Chatfield said arrangements are made to return those who don't apply for asylum to the north.

Chatfield said an international network of smugglers charges \$5,000 per person to slip migrants through into the south.

"Some come soaking wet straight from the boat with nothing but the clothes on their back," he said. "Detecting traffickers is a key priority for us and we'll continue to do so."

Cyprus has accused Turkey of deliberately channeling migrants in from the north, and has asked the EU's border agency Frontex to step in and help.

The government says its ability to host more migrants has been stretched beyond its limits, and also wants the EU to manage the arrival of Syrians — either directly from Syria or from Lebanon or Turkey, including relocating them to other EU states. □

Israel again demolishes Palestinian village in West Bank

By **LAURIE KELLMAN**
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Wednesday demolished the Bedouin herding community of Khirbet Humsu in the occupied West Bank, the latest chapter in the military's attempts to uproot the Palestinian village of makeshift homes.

At least 65 people, including 35 children, were displaced, said Christopher Holt of the West Bank Protection Consortium, a group of international aid agencies supported by the European Union that is assisting the residents.

The demolitions left the villagers, who earn their livelihood primarily by herding some 4,000 sheep, homeless for at least the fifth time in the past year. The EU in

the past has helped residents rebuild after previous demolitions.

Holt, who was in the area, said the army arrived without warning at 9 a.m.,

asked the residents to move, and when they refused, began flattening the makeshift homes. "It's a very serious escalation," he said. The Israeli govern-



In this Feb. 3, 2021, file, photo, Palestinian Bedouin watch Israeli troops demolish tents and other structures of the Khirbet Humsu hamlet in Jordan Valley in the West Bank.

Associated Press

ment, now run by a coalition headed by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, says the village was built illegally in the middle of a military firing range. But Palestinians say it is nearly impossible to receive building permits in Israeli-controlled territory, and human rights groups accuse Israel of stifling Palestinian development to make way for Israeli needs. Just a few kilometers (miles) away on either side are two large Jewish farming settlements, with greenhouses, animal enclosures and irrigated fields.

An Israeli security official said the government has carried out months of discussions with residents and offered an alternative site nearby. The official, who was not authorized

to speak publicly, said the offer for the new location stands.

Holt said the residents had no warning and say they have nowhere else to go in the sweltering heat. Minutes after the last demolition in February, residents got to work repairing their fences in hopes of gathering their sheep before dark. Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. Perched on the rolling highlands above the Jordan Valley, Khirbet Humsu is part of the 60% of the West Bank known as Area C, which is under full Israeli control as part of interim peace agreements from the 1990s. □

Haiti in upheaval: President Moïse assassinated at home

By EVENS SANON and
DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— Gunmen assassinated Haitian President Jovenel Moïse and wounded his wife in their home early Wednesday, inflicting more chaos on the Caribbean country that was already enduring gang violence, soaring inflation and protests by opposition supporters who accused the leader of increasing authoritarianism. Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph, who confirmed the killing, said the police and military were in control of security in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas where a history of dictatorship and political upheaval have long stymied the consolidation of democratic rule.

Despite Joseph's assurances that order would prevail, there was confusion about who should take control and widespread anxiety among Haitians. Authorities declared a "state of siege" in the country and closed the international airport. The normally bustling streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, were empty and quiet Wednesday. Sporadic gunshots were heard in the distance, public transportation was scarce, and some people searched for businesses that were open to food and water. Businesses had been ransacked in one area earlier. Bocchit Edmond, the Haitian ambassador to the United States, said the attack on the 53-year-old Moïse was carried out by "well-trained professional commandos" and "foreign mercenaries" who were masquerading as agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Moïse's wife, Martine, was in stable but critical condition and efforts were under way to move her to Miami for treatment, Edmond said in Washington.

Haiti has asked the U.S. government for assistance with the investigation, he said, adding that the assassins could have escaped over the land border to the Dominican Republic or by



In this April 7, 2018, file photo, Haiti's President Jovenel Moïse, center, leaves the museum during a ceremony marking the 215th anniversary of revolutionary hero Toussaint Louverture's death, at the National Pantheon museum in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Associated Press

sea. "We know for sure that if they are not currently in Haiti," he said, refusing to comment on who they were.

Haiti appeared to be heading for fresh volatility ahead of general elections later this year. Moïse had been ruling by decree for more than a year after failing to hold elections, and the opposition demanded he step down in recent months, saying he was leading it toward yet another grim period of authoritarianism.

Joseph said the heavily armed gunmen spoke Spanish or English, but he gave no details on the attack.

It was a testament to Haiti's fragile political situation that Joseph, who was only supposed to be prime minister temporarily, finds himself in charge. Joseph was considered a protégé of Moïse, and it was not clear how the opposition would react to his taking power. André Michel, one of Haiti's top opposition leaders, did not return messages requesting comment.

But Haiti appears to have few other options available. The Supreme Court's chief justice, who might be expected to help provide stability in a crisis, died recently of COVID-19.

Joseph is likely to lead Haiti for now, though that could change in a nation where constitutional provisions have been erratically observed, said Alex Dupuy, a Haiti-born sociologist who teaches at Wesleyan University in the United States.

The best scenario would be for the acting prime minister and opposition parties to come together and hold elections, Dupuy said.

"But, in Haiti, nothing can be taken for granted. It depends how the current balance of forces in Haiti plays out," said the academic, who described the situation as dangerous and volatile. Haiti's police force is already grappling with a recent spike in violence in Port-au-Prince that has displaced more than 14,700 people, he said.

Former President Michel Martelly, whom Moïse succeeded, called the assassination "a hard blow for our country and for Haitian democracy, which is struggling to find its way."

Joseph condemned the president's killing as a "hateful, inhumane and barbaric act."

"The country's security situation is under the control of the National Police of Haiti and the Armed Forces of Haiti," Joseph said in a statement from his office.

"The message to the people of Haiti is this is a tragic tragedy," she during a previously scheduled interview on CNN. "And we stand ready and stand by them to provide any assistance that's needed."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also condemned the assassination "in the strongest terms" and stressed that "the perpetrators of this crime must be brought to justice," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

A resident who lives near the president's home said she heard the attack.

"I thought there was an earthquake, there was so much shooting," said the woman who spoke on condition of anonymity because she fears for her life. "The president had problems with many people, but this is not how we expected him to die. This is something I wouldn't wish on any Haitian."

The U.S. Embassy in Haiti said it was restricting U.S. staff to its compounds and that the embassy would be closed Wednesday. □

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NOORD — While on vacation, the last thing you need to worry about is what to do or where to go for your COVID-19 testing. Many countries, including the U.S. require for all passengers heading back home to present with a negative test result for PCR or Antigen 72 hours prior to departure.

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Turn-around time for results is within 24 hours. Result is sent electronically to your email (check spam/ junk folder)

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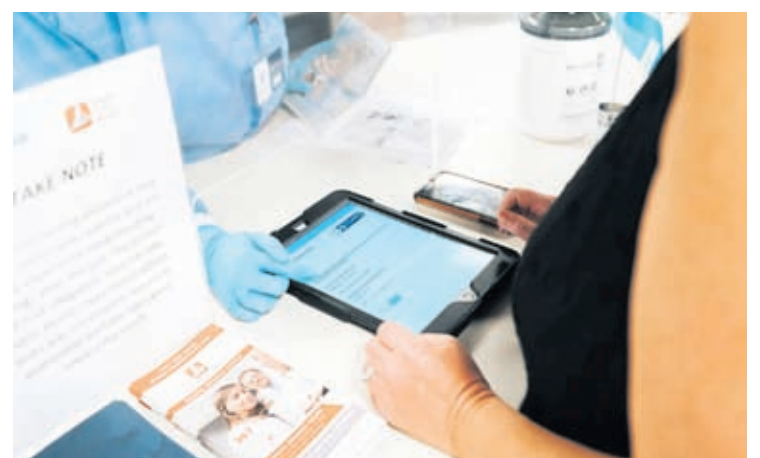
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Horizon Europe information meeting The EU research and Innovation programme 2021-2027

ORANJESTAD - The Department of Economic Affairs, Trade and Industry (DEACI) informs about an information meeting about Horizon Europe, the new program for science and innovation of the European Union.

For more information, please contact:
Mr. Humphrey Vrolijk
Department of Economics,
Trade and Industry
LG Smith Blvd. 160 2nd floor
Oranjestad, Aruba.
E-mail: H.vrolijk@deaci.aw
Tel: 5212413

It will also be Horizon Europe's official launch event for Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries. The information session will take place on Thursday 8 July from 11 a.m. local time. The event will be streamed live through the YouTube channel and will not be recorded. The launch event will be held in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish.

Horizon Europe is the new EU funding program of the European Commission with a budget of 95.5 billion euros. It runs from 2021 to 2027. These are grants awarded following a tender and relating to scientific and innovative projects, as well as tackling global challenges. The aim is to create high-level employment and improve the quality of life. □

You can follow the information session on the YouTube channel at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXehTzW0ioQ>
To register go to: https://euconf-eu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oZEX-vXKpTxCplweOs-exjg

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WILLEMSTAD, CURACAO — This last year has provided a number of challenges for the Protected Area Management Organizations of the Dutch Caribbean. These parks have not only had to withstand increased pressures of climate change and deteriorating environmental conditions but also the economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The severely underfunded parks almost did not survive the COVID crisis. The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) is looking to hire a staff member, generously funded by BirdLife Netherlands, to focus on increasing fundraising capacity for Dutch Caribbean biodiversity conservation. The protection of natural areas is crucial for the sustainable economic development of the islands to recover from the pandemic and to withstand the impacts of climate change.

New Vacancy Opportunity at DCNA Secretariat- Increasing Fundraising Capacity for Dutch Caribbean Biodiversity Conservation

The Protected Area Management Organizations of the Dutch Caribbean play a vital role in designing, implementing and managing nature conservation efforts. Due to COVID-19, all Protected Area Management Organizations in the Dutch Caribbean have seen both a significant drop in income due to the disappearance of user fees, but also due to the non-consideration by local, national, and kingdom governments on structural funding for the execution of their critical conservation work. This has resulted in the real possibility of Protected Area Management Organizations having to scale back or cease operations.

The protection of natural areas and the associated critical ecosystems and habitats are crucial for the sustainable economic development of the islands, especially considering the severe economic impact the pandemic has had on communities at the highest risk of climate change impacts within the Dutch Kingdom.

The DCNA conservation network, provides support to the Protected Area Management Organizations on all six islands of the Dutch Caribbean: Aruba National Parks Foundation, STINAPA Bonaire, CARMABI Curaçao, STENAPA St. Eustatius, the Saba Conservation Foundation and the Sint Maarten Nature Foundation. Organizations, including DCNA, have been able to provide emergency funding through DCNA's Conservation Trust Fund to the parks to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. But this is only enough to provide operational support in the short term. DCNA also created a Fundraising Committee to help bridge financial gaps. However, there is a need for a dedicated staff member to execute and coordinate fundraising activities as outlined by the Fundraising Committee. The parks require long-term, consistent funding to ensure they are able to plan for and enact critical conservation strategies for years to come.

Fortunately, BirdLife Netherlands has generously agreed to fund a position at the DCNA Secretariat to focus on building funding capacity for biodiversity conservation within the Dutch Caribbean. This individual will work within the DCNA Secretariat as the Senior Fundraising Officer and will be responsible for developing sustainable funding solutions for these parks. The new staff member individual will have the unique opportunity of designing and implementing a network of support, integrating stakeholders, donors and policy makers together.

The vacancy announcement is expected to be published soon. All interested applicants should follow along on DCNA's social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram) and website <https://dcnanature.org/news/> for updates on the position as they are made available. □

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Is Thursday the new Monday? Flexible working is in flux

By **ALEXANDRA OLSON**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Last year, companies around the U.S. scrambled to figure out how to shut down their offices and set up their employees for remote work as the COVID-19 virus suddenly bore down on the world. Now, in a mirror image, they are scrambling to figure out how to bring many of those employees back. Most companies are proceeding cautiously, trying to navigate declining COVID-19 infections against a potential backlash by workers who are not ready to return.

Tensions have spilled into the public at a few companies where some staff have organized petitions or even walkouts to protest being recalled to the office.

Many workers in high demand fields, such as tech or customer service, have options amid a rise in job postings promising "remote work" — an alluring prospect for people who moved during the pandemic to be closer to family or in search of more affordable cities.

"A lot of people have relocated and don't want to come back," said Chris Riccobono, the CEO of Untuckit LLC, a casual men's clothing company.

"There's a lot of crazy stuff that is a big day-to-day pain point."

Riccobono said he can't wait to get his 100 corporate staffers back to the office in Manhattan's Soho neighborhood because he believes that productivity and morale are higher that way.

Starting in September, the company will require those employees to report to the office Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays on the hope that the flexibility of a "hybrid" schedule will keep everyone happy.

Many others are similarly introducing a gradual return. Companies like Amazon and automakers Ford and General Motors have promised to adopt a hybrid approach permanently for their office staff, responding to internal and public

surveys showing an overwhelming preference for work-from-home options. But implementing a hybrid workplace can be a headache, from identifying

occupancy rate of about 32% in late June, according to estimates from Kastle Systems a security company that monitors access-card wipes at some 2,600 build-

it."

But she doesn't want to completely give up the three hours of extra time she saves without the commute.



In this June 16, 2021 file photo, people walk through steam from a street grating during the morning commute in New York.

Associated Press

which roles are most conducive to remote work to deciding which days of the week employees need to be in the office.

There are client meetings to consider. And some business leaders argue newer employees need more face-time as they begin their careers or start new at company.

"Thursday is the new Monday," according to Salesforce, a San Francisco-based technology firm, which found that Thursday was the most popular day for employees to report to the office when the company reopened its Sydney offices back in August.

Riccobono, on the other hand, insists employees show up on Mondays to get organized and set the tone for the week. Like many employers, however, he acknowledges he is still figuring things out as he navigates uncharted territory.

"We will revisit in January," he said. "We will see how it works."

Across the country, office buildings in the top 10 U.S. cities had an average oc-

cupancy rate of about 32% in late June, according to estimates from Kastle Systems a security company that monitors access-card wipes at some 2,600 build-

ings. In Manhattan, just 12% of office employees had returned as of late May, according to the latest survey by the Partnership for New York City, a non-profit organization of major business leaders and employers.

Romina Rugova, an executive at fashion brand Mansur Gavriel, enjoyed the tranquility as she sat on a riverside bench in lower Manhattan after a rare day back at the office for a meet-and-greet with the company's newly hired head of e-commerce.

A mother of two, Rugova had mixed feelings about returning to the office. Seeing colleagues in person after so long was invigorating, and she did not always enjoy blurring her family and professional life.

"The challenge is you have to be three people at the same time. You have to be a professional, you have to be a cook, you have to be a cleaner, you have to be a mom," Rugova said. "Being in the office after a while was so nice and refreshing. It's completely different experience, you don't realize

Many of her colleagues feel the same way, so Mansur Gavriel will likely implement a flexible policy when most of its 40 employees return to the office after Labor Day.

"We are still figuring it out," Rugova said.

While most employers will accelerate their return-to-office plans over the summer, nearly 40% of office employees will still be working remotely in September, according to the Partnership for New York City's survey.

The trend has raised concerns about an unequal economic recovery, given that working remotely is an option available to a privileged few.

Only about 15% of workers teleworked because of the pandemic in June, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's monthly jobs report. Most work jobs at restaurants, schools, hospitals, factories and other places that require them to show up in person.

Some of large investment banks, which are top employers and office space tenants in New York City,

are leading the push to bring employees back, taking a hardline approach in comparison with tech giants that have rolled out generous remote work policies.

Morgan Stanley CEO James Gorman said at a conference earlier this month that he would "be very disappointed if people haven't found their way into the office" by Labor Day.

"If you can go a restaurant in New York City, you can come into the office," Gorman said, though he acknowledged that there should be flexibility for parents still struggling with childcare logistics that fell apart during the pandemic.

Gorman also made clear that he was not open to the "work from anywhere" mentality that some companies have adopted, saying employees who want to earn New York City salaries should work in the city.

The CEOs of JPMorgan Chase and Goldman Sachs have made similar comments, sparking furious debate about whether they would push employees out the door.

It remains to be seen how deeply remote work policies will influence recruitment and retention. But professionals looking for flexibility are finding they have options.

Brecia Young, a data analytics scientist and mother of a 1-year-old child, had choices when she was looking to switch jobs from a small Chicago firm.

She accepted an offer from Seattle-based real estate company Zillow in part because the company allowed her to work from home and stay in Chicago, where she and her husband have relatives to help with child care.

"Moving to the West Coast was on the table but it would have been a real hardship," said Young, adding that her husband also would have had to look for a new job. "I love the time savings just in terms of the commute. It's like 90 minutes of saved time that I can repurpose." □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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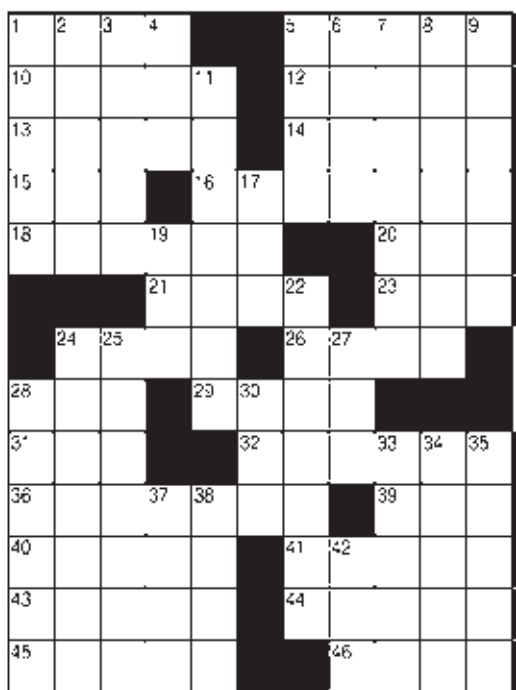
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7-8

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-8 CRYPTOQUOTE

U F I Z K F Z B L U K Z N Z C R C T X X Z R

T D O T H P Z L U Z I I Z F P H N Z L

P C L K O T H G H Q H K J L J Z K P L U

L U T K K S U D C H K J R L S

— E. Z I C G B L G G

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST. WHAT YOU PLANT NOW, YOU WILL HARVEST LATER. — OG MANDINO

Wildlife, air quality at risk as Great Salt Lake nears low

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The silvery blue waters of the Great Salt Lake sprawl across the Utah desert, having covered an area nearly the size of Delaware for much of history. For years, though, the largest natural lake west of the Mississippi River has been shrinking. And a drought gripping the American West could make this year the worst yet.

The receding water is already affecting the nesting spot of pelicans that are among the millions of birds dependent on the lake. Sailboats have been hoisted out of the water to keep them from getting stuck in the mud. More dry lakebed getting exposed could send arsenic-laced dust into the air that millions breathe.

"A lot of us have been talking about the lake as flatlining," said Lynn de Freitas, executive director of Friends of the Great Salt Lake.

The lake's levels are expected to hit a 170-year low this year. It comes as the drought has the U.S. West bracing for a brutal wildfire season and coping with already low reservoirs. Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, a Republican, has begged people to cut back on lawn watering and "pray for rain."

For the Great Salt Lake, though, it is only the latest challenge. People for years have been diverting water from rivers that flow into the lake to water crops and supply homes. Because the lake is shallow — about 35 feet (11 meters) at its deepest point — less water quickly translates to receding shorelines.

The water that remains stretches across a chunk of northern Utah, with highways on one end and remote land on the other. A resort — long since closed — once drew sunbathers who would float like corks in the extra salty waters. Picnic tables once a quick stroll from the shore are now a 10-minute walk away.



Associated Press

Robert Atkinson, 91, remembers that resort and the feeling of weightlessness in the water. When he returned this year to fly over the lake in a motorized paraglider, he found it changed.

"It's much shallower than I would have expected it to be," he said.

The waves have been replaced by dry, gravelly lakebed that's grown to 750 square miles (1,942 square kilometers). Winds can whip up dust from the dry lakebed that is laced with naturally occurring arsenic, said Kevin Perry, a University of Utah atmospheric scientist.

It blows through a region that already has some of the dirtiest wintertime air in the country because of seasonal geographic conditions that trap pollution between the mountains. Perry warns of what happened at California's Owens Lake, which was pumped dry to feed thirsty Los Angeles and created a dust bowl that cost millions of dollars to tamp down. The Great Salt Lake is much larger and closer to a populated area, Perry said.

Luckily, much of the bed of Utah's giant lake has a crust that makes it tougher for dust to blow. Perry is researching how long the protective crust will last and how dangerous the soil's arsenic might be to people. This year is primed to be especially bleak. Utah is one of the driest states in the country, and most of its water comes from snowfall. The snowpack was below normal last winter and the soil was dry, meaning much of the melted snow

that flowed down the mountains soaked into the ground.

Most years, the Great Salt Lake gains up to 2 feet (half a meter) from spring runoff. This year, it was just 6 inches (15 centimeters), Perry said. "We've never had an April lake level that was as low as it was this year," he said. More exposed lakebed also means more people have ventured onto the crust, including off-road vehicles that damage it, Great Salt Lake coordinator Laura Vernon said.

"The more continued drought we have, the more of the salt crust will be weathered and more dust will become airborne because there's less of that protective crust layer," she said.

The swirling dust also could speed the melting of Utah's snow, according to research by McKenzie Skiles, a snow hydrologist at the University of Utah. Her study showed that dust from one storm made the snow so much darker that it melted a week earlier than expected. While much of that dust came from other sources, an expansion of dry lakebed raises concerns about changes to the state's billion-dollar ski industry.

"No one wants to ski dirty snow," she said.

While the lake's vast waters are too salty for most creatures except brine shrimp, for sailors like Marilyn Ross, 65, it's a tranquil paradise with panoramas of distant peaks.

"You get out on this lake and it's better than going to a psychiatrist, it's really very calming," she said. □

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Preschool show boasts girl power, plus nonbinary bison Fred

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — If there's a missing necklace, an AWOL baby penguin or a herd of on-the-loose caribou, Ridley Jones is your go-to guy. Or make that your girl.

The 6-year-old title character of Netflix's new animated series has the pluck and daring of classic screen heroes who were routinely male, a stubborn trope that "Ridley Jones" creator Chris Nee is eager to vanquish for TV's youngest viewers.

"Girls have not really gotten to be the action-adventure leads of shows" aimed at preschoolers, she said. "It felt really different to give Ridley that journey."

Nee counts herself a "huge" fan of 1970s and '80s thrill-ride movies including "Goonies," "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones" — with the latter getting a tip of the fedora from Ridley's own headgear in the six-episode series debuting July 13.

Iara Nemirovsky voices Ridley, part of an impressive cast that includes Blythe Danner, Laraine Newman, Sutton Foster, Jane Lynch and Bob Bergen.

An award-winning maker of children's animated fare, Nee's consistent goal is to include an array of characters. She did it with "Doc McStuffins," about an African American girl whose



This image released by Netflix shows Ridley Jones, foreground center, in a scene from the animated series "Ridley Jones."

Associated Press

career dreams inspired its viewers, especially Black youngsters, to see medicine as an option, and she does it with "Ridley Jones." Ridley is following a family tradition by joining her mother and grandmother in protecting the museum they call home and its precious relics, including Egyptian mummies and animals which, after visitors scoot, come to comically endearing and sometimes wayward life.

Nee is "just really a master of storytelling for this audience," said Heather Tilert, director of preschool content for Netflix.

There are overt lessons to be learned, as when over-eager Ridley pushes for more responsibility before she's ready to handle it. But Nee and her writers don't beat the drum for gender equality, allowing Ridley's exploits to make the point. An equally nuanced approach goes for a friendly, hairdo-conscious bison named Fred, voiced by Ezra Menas. In the first episode, Ridley asks Peaches the monkey if Fred is "a she or a he."

"I don't know. They're just a Fred," replies Peaches. "Cool," says Ridley, and the action resumes.

Ridley's query about Fred mirrors a real-life conversation that was recounted to Nee, in which a child was discussing a playmate who identified as neither male or female. To give the character authenticity, actor Menas is nonbinary, Nee said.

She said she's determined to "push the boundaries of representation" by including what is a rare if not unprecedented character in a show for preschoolers.

"In many ways, Fred is playing out a lot of things that I felt as a gay kid growing up in the '70s and the '80s," she said, when hostility to-

ward gay men exploded during the nascent AIDS crisis. Now it's people in the nonbinary and trans world being targeted, Nee said.

"You might be at a moment of finding your true self, which is a very joyful thing, at a time when you're looking at the news and are very aware there are factions of the country who really hate you," she said.

What would Nee, parent to a teenager, say to those who might consider the show's viewers too young to be faced with questions about gender?

"It's just actually what's happening in the world, and we're reflecting it," she said. "Sticking your head in the sand isn't going to change that, and it is going to mean that we're not being as supportive as we can be to the kids who are going through these things."

Netflix executive Tilert said the diversity reflected in Nee's work is a key part of its value to the streaming service, which signed a multiyear deal with her in 2018.

"We have a global member base, and it's really important to us that all of our members, especially kids and family, can see themselves reflected on screen and reflected in our shows," Tilert said. "That's part of how we're going to build trust." □



Jodie Foster, who will receive an honorary Palme d'Or during the opening ceremony, poses for photographers at the 74th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

Associated Press

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — "I got one thing to say be-

fore I sit down," said Spike Lee during the Cannes Film Festival opening ceremony. "I wish I could speak

With fluent French, Jodie Foster at home again in Cannes

French like Jodie Foster!" In the first two days of Cannes, one thing everyone can agree on is that Jodie Foster really speaks terrific French. On Tuesday, Foster was awarded an honorary Palme d'Or for lifetime achievement. The award was presented to her by Lee and South Korean director Bong Joon Ho. "During this year of transition, the cinema has been my lifeline," said Foster.

If Foster, 58, has seemed at home in Cannes, it could be because her experience at the festival spans

45 years. Foster first came to Cannes with "Taxi Driver" in 1976. She was just 13 at the time, a sunny, freckled face in the middle of a media storm over the violence in Martin Scorsese's film.

"Taxi Driver" still won the Palme d'Or, even though the then-jury president, playwright Tennessee Williams, condemned the film. "Watching violence on the screen is a brutalizing experience for the spectator," said Williams. "Films should not take a voluptuous pleasure in

spilling blood and lingering on terrible cruelties as though one were at a Roman circus."

Black-and-white photos from the time capture Foster smiling next to Robert De Niro and Scorsese. Even then, Foster waved off translators and answered questions at the film's press conference in French. (Foster attended a French prep school in Los Angeles and her family lived for a time in France. She has made films in French and done some French dubs, herself.) □

Van Aert claims Ventoux stage, Pogacar keeps yellow jersey

MALAUCENE, France (AP)

— Winning the Ventoux stage at cycling's biggest race is a rare and celebrated feat.

No wonder a champion like Wout Van Aert, with multiple titles across the sport's most prestigious events, felt like he posted his best victory ever after mastering the daunting and grueling mountain twice in the same day at the Tour de France on Wednesday.

Near the site where his fellow Belgian Eddy Merckx — a cycling legend with five Tour wins — had to be given oxygen soon after winning the stage to Ventoux back in 1970, Van Aert triumphed following an unprecedented double ascent of the iconic mountain.

The lively stage also gave a glimmer of hope to the rivals of race leader Tadej Pogacar that he can be taken off his perch, after the defending champion briefly got dropped on the second ascent but erased the deficit on the downhill to keep his yellow jersey.

Van Aert was part of a breakaway that formed in the early stages of the nearly 200-kilometers Stage 11 in southern France. The one-day classic specialist and multiple cyclo-cross world champion made his decisive move on the final ascent to drop his breakaway companions, then kept his advantage on the



Belgium's Wout Van Aert rides during the ascent of the Mont Ventoux as part of the eleventh stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 198.9 kilometers (123.6 miles) with start in Sorgues and finish in Malaucene, France, Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Associated Press

descent leading to the town of Malaucene.

"I know I'm not the best climber, but when I pick my day I know I have my chances," said van Aert. "The first time I climbed the Ventoux I was 10. It was my first big one. I was very motivated to try something today, this region is really famous in Belgium, and it's a mythical Tour climb."

Pogacar was fourth, one minute and 38 seconds behind. He did not lose ground on his main rivals, even increasing his overall lead after his closest opponent at the start of the stage, Ben O'Connor, suffered a hard

day and dropped to fifth overall.

But for the first time since the start of the race, Pogacar showed weaknesses when he lost ground to Jonas Vingegaard near the summit.

"I could not follow all the way up, it was just a little bit too much," he said. "It was a super-hard, hot day." In the end it was just a scare and Pogacar holds a comfortable overall lead of five minutes and 18 seconds over Rigoberto Uran, with Vingegaard in third place, 5:32 off the pace.

"I had to stay calm and find a new rhythm," Po-

gacar added. "I did not panic and that was a good thing."

At 26, van Aert is a jack of all trades. He can sprint, climb and time trial, but did not fight for the general classification, working in support of Jumbo-Visma leader Primož Roglic. He was given more leeway by his team after Roglic retired from the Tour last week, setting his sights on a stage win.

Van Aert went solo during the second ascent of the Ventoux, about 11 kilometers from the summit. As he approached the finish line, he smiled to TV cameras and clenched his fist, then

raised on his pedals and yelled in triumph with his arms outstretched.

It was van Aert's fourth career stage win at the Tour. The Ventoux is part of the Tour's lore. It was the site of an incredible scene back in 2016 when four-time champion Chris Froome had to briefly run toward the summit after he damaged his bike in a crash.

An epic contest between Lance Armstrong and Marco Pantani in 2000 also took place on the slopes of the "Bald Giant," where British rider Tom Simpson died in 1967 from a combination of amphetamines and alcohol.

The stage got off to a lively start as world champion Julian Alaphilippe broke away with Nairo Quintana, but the Colombian climber could not follow his pace and got dropped.

Alaphilippe was joined by a group of three riders and created a three-minute lead over the main pack across the vineyards and rolling landscape of the Luberon region. Behind the quartet, a group of counter-attackers chased hard in the first big climb of the day, the Col de la Liguère, but could not fill the gap.

In sizzling hot weather, Pogacar rode in the main pack with his yellow jersey wide open. Others tried to cool down with small bags of ice cubes applied to their necks. □

Suns forward Saric out with torn ACL in right knee

By **DAVID BRANDT**

AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Phoenix Suns forward Dario Saric has a torn ACL in his right knee that he suffered during the first quarter of Game 1 of the NBA Finals on Tuesday night.

Saric's right knee appeared to buckle when he landed on a jump stop while trying to score against Milwaukee's Brook Lopez.

Shortly afterward, he limped off the court and into the locker room.

The team confirmed the

severity of the injury on Wednesday.

The 6-foot-10 Saric is one of the team's main contributors off the bench, averaging 4.8 points and 2.6 rebounds in about 11 minutes per game. The team has relatively thin depth in the frontcourt, and turned to Torrey Craig and Frank Kaminsky to fill most of Saric's minutes in the 118-105 victory in Game 1.

Craig has been a regular part of the playing rotation, but Kaminsky hasn't seen much time in the postseason. □



Phoenix Suns forward Dario Saric, left, shoots as Los Angeles Clippers forward Marcus Morris Sr. defends during the first half in Game 6 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Finals Wednesday, June 30, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

8-time Wimbledon champ Roger Federer unsure if he'll be back

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**

AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— Roger Federer has been feted by plenty of ovations at Wimbledon's Centre Court. None quite like this one, though. This was not a celebration and didn't come at the end of the match.

Instead, it delayed the beginning of what turned out to be the last game of his quarterfinal loss and felt more like a "thank you" or — just in case — a "goodbye." And Federer acknowledged afterward he isn't sure whether he'll be back. The eight-time champion at the All England Club bowed out 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-0 against 14th-seeded Hubert Hurkacz of Poland on Wednesday, a surprisingly lopsided finish to Federer's 22nd appearance in the tournament.

Asked whether it also might have been his last appearance here, he replied: "I don't know. I really don't know. I've got to regroup."

As for whether retirement is an immediate possibility, he offered this: "No, I hope not. ... The goal is to play, of course."

That likely was on thousands of minds in the stadium when Federer stepped to the baseline to serve while trailing 5-0 in the third set: He waited while fans in the full-to-capacity stands applauded and cheered, some rising to their feet.

Soon enough, it was over, only the third shutout set ceded by Federer in 429 career Grand Slam matches; both of the others came at the French Open.

"The last few games, obviously, you can feel that you're not coming back from it," said Federer, who spoke steadily and did not betray any emotion in his news conference. "I'm not used to that kind of situation, obviously, very much. Especially not here." Hurkacz, a 24-year-old from Poland who has called Federer his idol, was asked whether he could have imagined this result. "Probably not," he responded.

And yet, this was not the



Poland's Hubert Hurkacz celebrates after defeating Switzerland's Roger Federer during the men's singles quarterfinals match on day nine of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Associated Press

Federer the world is used to watching. He underwent two operations on his right knee in 2020. He arrived at Wimbledon having played eight matches this season. Factor in that Federer turns 40 on Aug. 8 and maybe it was too much to ask that he make his way to the closing weekend, even if this is a tournament he's won more than any other man, and even if it's contested on a surface, grass, on which he's best.

He simply never was able to summon the serving and shot-making that carried him to 20 Grand Slam titles, tied with Rafael Nadal for the men's record.

"I'm actually very happy I made it as far as I did here and I actually was able to play Wimbledon at the level that I did after everything I went through," said Federer, who reiterated that he has not decided whether to go to the Tokyo Olympics. "Of course I would like to play (Wimbledon) again, but at my age, you're just never sure what's around the corner."

Hurkacz's opponent Friday will be No. 7 Matteo Berret-

тини of Italy, who eliminated No. 16 Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada 6-3, 5-7, 7-5, 6-3 to reach his second major semifinal. Hurkacz never had made it beyond the third round at any Slam.

In Friday's semifinal on the other half of the draw, No. 1 seed Novak Djokovic faces No. 10 Denis Shapovalov. After racing to a 5-0 lead at the outset Wednesday, Djokovic dropped three consecutive games to 48th-ranked Marton Fucsovics. Wasted five set points in the process, too. Soon enough, Djokovic righted himself, as he usually does, and beat Fucsovics 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 to reach his 10th semifinal at the All England Club and 41st at a Slam.

That allowed the 34-year-old from Serbia to continue his pursuit of a sixth championship at Wimbledon — and third in a row — along with a 20th major trophy. There's this, too: Djokovic is 19-0 at majors this season as he pursues the first calendar-year Grand Slam by a man since Rod Laver in 1969. Djokovic won the Australian Open in February and the French Open in

June. "I'm not chasing anybody," Djokovic said. "I'm making my own path and my own journey, my own history." Shapovalov edged No. 25 Karen Khachanov of Russia 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-4, then looked ahead to facing Djokovic.

"I do believe that I have the game to beat him," said Shapovalov, a 22-year-old left-hander from Canada. Hurkacz appeared quite comfortable on this unfamiliar stage. He played sublimely, with three times as many winners, 36, as unforced errors, 12.

"Obviously, I was a little bit nervous. I mean, playing against Roger in a Grand Slam quarterfinal, it's a very big thing for me," Hurkacz said. "But I was trying to stay as calm as I could." Federer finally seemed to make some headway in the second set, ahead 3-0. "Got to find a way to win it, somehow," Federer mused afterward.

But Hurkacz conceded nothing. Undaunted by the setting, the stakes, the foe or the almost-uniformly-for-Federer fans, Hurkacz claimed four of the next

fives game to pull even at 4-all, breaking along the way with a stinging forehand return of a 101 mph serve that drew a netted a backhand.

In the tiebreaker — preceded by loud chants of "Let's go, Roger! Let's go!" and rhythmic clapping — it was more of the same: Hurkacz hitting his spots and Federer stumbling.

"Brutal," Federer said. On one foray to the net, he lost his footing and missed what could have been a simple volley.

The third set went by in a blink. When Federer missed a forehand wide to close things, he packed his bags and hustled off toward the locker room with a wave and a thumbs-up.

"Now that that's over, you've just got to reassess everything. You've got to sit down, talk about it: What went well? What didn't go so well? Where is the body? Where is the knee? Where is the mind?" said Federer, who will meet with his two coaches and other members of his team. "As you can see, it was a struggle for me." □